

457. The girdle and what it conceals. Very many cases can be cited in which a girdle is worn, but nothing for concealment, unless it be of the umbilicus. In the Louvre (S. 962) may be seen a statue of a deformed primitive god of the Egyptians, Bes, who wears a string around the waist and nothing else. A girdle is often used as a pocket, without any reference to decency.¹ Convenience would then lead to the suspensorium arrangement or the pubic shell. Also from the girdle was hung any swinging glittering object to avert the evil eye from the genitals. There was no concealment and could be no motive of modesty. The aborigines of Queensland never cover the genitals except on special public occasions, or when near white settlements. The men wear the case only at corroborees and other public festivals.² On Tanna (New Hebrides) it is thought dangerous for a man to see another without any concealment.³ The Indians on the Shingu show that such covering as they wear has no purpose of concealment, for it conceals nothing.⁴ The device of the East Greenland Eskimo is also evidently for utility, not for modesty.⁵ In order to escape flies, Brunache and his companions took refuge under a tree which is shunned by flies. It is from this tree that the women pluck the bunches of leaves which they wear dangling before and behind.⁶

458. Modesty and decency not primitive. At the earliest stage of the treatment of the body we find motives of utility and ornament mixed with superstition and vanity and quickly developing connections with magic, kin notions, and goblinism. Modesty and decency are very much later derivatives.

459. What parts of the body are tabooed?

Cases may be
adduced to. prove that the taboo of concealment
does not always
attach to the parts of the body to which it
attaches in our tra-
ditions. Hottentot women wear a head cloth of
gay European
stuff. They will not take this off. The
Herero " think it a
great cause of shame if a married woman removes
this national

¹ Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, II, 284. ^s JAI, XXIII, 368.

² Roth, *Queensland Aborig.*, 114. ^{*} *BerL. Mus.*, 1888,
173.

⁵ Holm, *Angmagslikerne*, Plates VII, XX, XXII.

⁶ *Afr. Cent.*, 155.